

Rêvenance

A Zine of Hauntings from Underground Histories

Issue No. 1

September 2016 (A.Da. 100, A.H. 186)



Featuring

The Dead: Alphonse Allais / Georges d'Heylli / Alphonse Karr / Gérard de Nerval
/ Charles Nodier / Maurice Rollinat / Michel Roly / Francis Vielé-Griffin

The Living: Raymond E. Andé III / John M. Bennett / Peter Ciccariello /
Michael Helsem / Gleb Kolomiets / Edward Kulemin / Jim Leftwich /
Olchar E. Lindsann

Forward (and Back)

Révenance promotes history practiced as game, as social necromancy, as activism, as dream (fr., *rêve*), as trans-generational collaboration, as communal memory: a historiography that runs athwart the academic, refuses to describe history as dead, as finished, which does not stand apart to observe its object from a distance, in the posture of false 'objectivity' which Power always assumes. Instead: a *committed* historiography, which does not claim to stand outside the stream of time or apart from its object, intellectual and precise, yet ludic and multi-form, one moment manifest as an essay, the next as a poem; a historiography researched and written *from within* the utopian fringe, and *for* the same community, responsive to our changing conditions, needs, and desires; history as a communal dream of something intimately *other* within itself. A historiography that *we take personally*, which merges imperceptibly into daily life, thought, embodied dissent, and continued experimental practice and life.

Like the Revenant imprint and archive, this journal will focus on forgotten and newly-discovered histories of avant-garde, radical activist, utopian, and other underground countercultures. While the primary focus will be on the 19th Century, earlier and later material is also welcome, and contributions that directly connect counter-cultural movements and strategies across time are particularly encouraged. The primary goal is to explore histories, communities, and themes that are not consistently represented elsewhere. *Révenance* seeks to develop a community of independent DIY researchers who see historical work as part of a communal praxis directed toward contemporary and future change; it is a laboratory in which countercultural history is transmuted, reflected and disseminated in the current lifestyle, writing, music, art, and thought of present-day communities of dissent or otherness.

There is a small but ardent sprinkling of us across the world whose varied interests have led us to converge, via different paths, upon an overlapping cluster of historical subjects, and who are activating that history within an array of subcultures from the Avant-Garde to Fanfic to Punk to Decadence to Weird Fiction; a lot of knowledge and reflection, which has scarcely been shared or made visible. Ideally, the journal's readers will also be its contributors; with time, we will find our separate areas of research connecting and reinforcing each other.

We welcome all forms of historical engagement: essays, translations, sample passages of books and images in the public domain, transductions & re-workings of old work, poems (think Ed Sanders' Investigative Poetics, Banville's poems on Romanticism), book reviews, stories (romans à clefs? speculative fanfic?), bibliographies and reading-lists, historiographic theory, and more. Much of this material may be drawn upon for later re-publication in anthologies by Revenant Editions, or expanded to full chapbooks. It will consistently feature passages and translations taken from the Revenant Archive, and research relating to it and the *Resurrecting the Bouzingo* project.

This first issue indicates the potential range of our collective enquiry and approach: an essay on subversive historiography by Russian avant-gardist Gleb Kolomiets, translations of Decadent poetry by contemporary dark dandy Raymond E. Andre III, an experimental transduction by avant-poet & publisher John M. Bennett of a frenetic poet and a working-class socialist activist from the 19th Century, pictographic meditations by the experimental poet Edward Kulemin, straightforward translations of Romanticist verse, avant-garde Volapük texts from 1890 (Vielé-Griffin) and today (Michael Helsem), and a facebook discussion thread linking the late 20th Century Russian visual poet Rea Nikonova with the early 20th Century painter Malevich and the late 19th Century *Incoherents* group. I have also included the Forwards from the inaugural issues of two small 19th Century journals that have served as partial models and inspirations for *Rêvenance*. Future issues will expand on radical politics, occultism, utopian experimentation, gender-play, racial equity, and other dimensions.

Rêvenance is a conversation, a scrapbook, a walking corpse, an arsenal, a reliquary, a warning, a game, a weapon, a rotting box unearthed in a deserted garret, a dream or nightmare, a return of the repressed. It is the dead returned to earth to play; and also to set things aflame.

Olchar E. Lindsann

The word 'zine' in the subtitle is a reminder that we desire participation above all, and encourage contributions that are humble in size, but striking in their interest or intriguing in their implications. I particularly encourage short essays, micro-essays, and translations—we'd rather have a couple paragraphs on a fascinating subject than nothing at all because you haven't the time to write something longer.

The journal will be published on an irregular basis, whenever enough contributions accumulate and I have time to print. Submissions will be rolling: send me what you have when it's ready, and it will go into the next issue. Email contributions or questions to monoclelash@gmail.com or olindsann@gmail.com.

CONTENTS

Edward Kulemin, <i>Apollo Concept</i>	2
Olchar E. Lindsann, <i>Forward (and Back)</i>	3
<i>Contents</i>	5
Gleb Kolomiets, <i>Who Governs the History of Art?</i>	6
Georges d'Heylli, <i>Forward to the Gazette Anecdотique</i>	9
Alphonse Karr, <i>Forward to Les Guêpes</i>	10
Michel Roly, <i>L'Abeille</i> , transduction by John M. Bennett	16
Edward Kulemin, <i>Untitled</i>	18
Jim Leftwich & Co., <i>A Thread: From Nikonova to the Incoherents</i>	19
Alphonse Allais, <i>Some Figures</i> . trans. Olchar E. Lindsann	23
Maurice Rollinat, <i>The Absinthe Drinker</i> . trans. Raymond E. Andre III	25
Maurice Rollinat, <i>The Belovèd Embalmed</i> . trans. Raymond E. Andre III	26
Edward Kulemin, <i>Manifests 2 & 3</i>	28
Gérard de Nerval, <i>Gothic Song</i>	29
John M. Bennett hacks Charles Nodier, <i>tous les choses</i>	29
Charles Nodier, <i>Invention</i>	30
Francis Vielé-Griffin, <i>Volapük Fragments</i>	31
Michael Helsem, <i>Knife at Raintime</i>	31

Many of the source texts are available online at gallica.bnf.fr and/or at archive.org. Supplements with source texts will accompany future issues.

Cover image by Olchar E. Lindsann, collaged from: Célestin Nanteuil, *Portrait of Alphonse Karr* (1838), Grandville, Cover to Karr's *Les Guêpes* (1839), Tony Johannot, illustrations from Nodier's *Sept Châteaux du Roi de Bohême* (1830/52), Cham, cartoon of an anarchist bookshop from *Études sociales* (1848) & Colophon from the *Gazette Anecdотique* (1876). All constituent images are photocopied from original editions held in the Revenant Archive.

*Gleb Kolomiets is extremely active in the contemporary Russian avant-garde, as writer, theorist, publisher, translator, organiser, curator, and historian. He is the editor of the journal **Slova**, an important point of international exchange among radical, anti-commercial creative workers; founder of the decentralized underground press **Mycelium**; and has organised many cultural events in Smolensk and elsewhere, including the **First Russian Asemic Exhibit**.*

What Governs the History of Art? (2016)

Gleb Kolomiets

In our daily experience we often observe how history becomes an instrument of power - the works of historians end up as transmitters of the state and religious propaganda, tools of the market or the media for the public opinion. It seems that history easily submits to the outside influences; its structure in some way facilitates implantation of external elements not related to cognition.

Indeed, the history, if we understand it as a narration on events, evidence and material objects in accordance with a certain time interval, is inevitably subordinated not only to the linear structure of speech or writing, but also the linear structure of time. Even at this level of the organization, we find the power relations - the objects of historical narrative are in a subordinate position to the general rules of the organization of narrative and time. And this power can be considered a political, as time management and control of the narrative are also the ways of managing people (working hours, personal history as a social role).

Is it possible to make the history of art immune to the incoming impulses of the political influence? I do not think so, because it would require establishing of the history which has no relation to time or description of events. However, since history is so easy to manage, may it be possible to reclaim the historical narrative for personal needs or for needs of a community? If it is impossible to emancipate history of art, maybe we can make sure that it does not serve politics, market, or society in general?

To answer these questions, we need to consider the exact power relations established within the historical narrative. By taking control of the points where subjection of the history takes place, we *probably* may be able to protect the entire structure from control by the forces we oppose.¹

¹I have written "probably" because our unconscious is constantly influenced by the major political and social structures, thus while reclaiming history for ourselves, we can unwittingly become the agents of power. However, this should not stop us, since any experiment, even carried out under the strictest control, can bring unexpected and beneficial results.

Describing these "points of subjection" I will deliberately avoid their classification, as classification itself is a way to establish power relations. From a tactical point of view, it would be more effective to describe them in arbitrary order, as if I am watching the behavior of an animal or human and describing his behavior as it appeared in a natural way.

1. *Temporal organization.* The concept of historical period determined the structure of the modern history of art (Wolfflin) and opened numerous opportunities to for the political influences. It is easy to build a hierarchy of the events arranged in certain order and generalized under the basic concept of period. And it is easy to give the hierarchy ideological content. Therefore, while reclaiming the history for personal purposes, it is important to pay attention to the concept of time we use. The linear time is not the only possibility. One can use a circular scheme or describe the events while taking in account their substantial incompleteness (when we do not separate the events from what is called their consequences and describe the past like what is occurs now), or to try to find our own concepts of time.
2. *Composition of narrative.* It is impossible to coin a narrative without an organization. Every story has a beginning, middle and end. The academic history is subject to criteria of the scientific narrative, to the requirements of the so-called objectivity. When we reclaim the history for ourselves, we must keep distance from the ideological forms of narrative. For example, Vasari showed that the history of art can be made up of subjective stories about individuals, about life of the artists. Since then, biography has become a tool of subjection of the history by market (non-fiction biographies of the artists and writers as a commercial product), however, this does not prevent us from the search of hidden emancipative potentials of biography. In addition, we can adopt the narrative practices which were used by the avant-garde literature and visual art (The Nouveau Roman, cut-up, asemic writing etc.). The inclusion of the author into the narrative can be an effective way of resistance to the "spirit of objectivity" of the academic history.
3. *Totalization.* General concepts such as style, movement, form, iconography and other define the modern art history. The generalization of historical figures,

events and movements under control of the general notion automatically arranges their hierarchy, and that allows dividing primary from secondary, significant from insignificant, mainstreaming from marginal, and thus controlling a reader's attention. It is a way of elimination or marginalization of the "inconvenient" aspects of the history in order to transform its overall picture into something consistent with the interests of the authorities. Therefore, while reclaiming the history, in my opinion, one should avoid these generalizations. There are a lot of alternative concepts ready for use: community or network; rhizome, plateau, plane or chaosmos (Deleuze and Guattari); multitude (Hardt and Negri). And there is a good tactical opportunity here for the invention of the concepts of our own. The main point is to use concepts that resist hierarchy and refer to the decentralized structures.

4. *Causal relationships.* Back in the 18th century David Hume dealt a crushing blow to the concept of causality by showing that its explanatory power is much overrated. However, scientists and philosophers still continue to fight actively for the restoration of the power of causality. Indeed, the binary division of events and the idea that one of them is derived from the other allows you to create rigid conceptual structure with the powerful relationships of subordination. And this technique was adopted by art history. As a consequence of the establishment of causality we can unfold a genealogy of styles, state the impact of context on art and vice versa or isolate the determining factors of the historical process in art. It is better to avoid the establishment of causal relationships while reclaiming the history for yourself, or at least assert their probabilistic nature.
5. *Context.* Judging from my experience, description of the context is mainly used for finding the cause-and-effect relationships. Impact of the situation, the impact of the zeitgeist, the influence of circumstances - everything is at the service of casual hierarchies. However, the context has value in itself, because it allows the control of the range of interpretations of artworks and management of the search for overt and covert allusions. In this case, the context becomes an attention management tool. In terms of resistance to power, there are two possible tactics: either achievement of maximum completeness of the disclosure of the context, so that the reader's attention covers the entire range

of possible interpretations, or, conversely, the complete elimination of the context from the historical narrative and description of the history of art as an isolated and autonomous sphere of reality.

So these are the points of subjection of the art history. They can be perceived as a kind of strategic resource of a revolutionary. As in 1917 Bolsheviks began the destruction of the tsarist regime with the capture of post and telegraph, so now non-academic historians can start fighting with pro-government history with takeover of these strategic positions. The point is to learn the "lessons of history" and recall the results of the Bolshevik Revolution, to make sure that the seizure of power does not give birth to a totalitarian regime.

[illegible]

The ***Gazette anecdotique, littéraire, artistique et bibliographique*** (***Anecdotal, Literary, Artistic and Bibliographic Gazette***) was published from the 1870s into the first years of the 20th Century, and was aimed at cultural historians, archivists, and others involved in Romanticist and post-Romanticist history. It was edited and mostly written by Georges d'Heylli, chief archivist of the Comédie française, who also published a dictionary of literary pseudonyms and a collection of documents related to the Paris Commune. The ***Gazette Anecdotique*** has served as one of the principal inspirations for ***Revenance***, not least due to Heylli's hope that his readers would be his principle contributors.

Forward

to the Anecdotal, Literary, Artistic, and Bibliographic Gazette (1876)

by Georges d'Heylli

The very title of our new publication sufficiently indicates its aim and spirit. We wish to give, two times a month, a quick story of the fortnight as recounted by curious events, new or forgotten, anecdotes, biographical details, documents, in a word, all the particularities that can extend interest. We also want to collect or point out, in choosing them from amongst the best, the thousand daily stories, the relevant letters, the articles or fragments of articles most marked by various points of view—politics excepted—sowed from day to day, and as quickly vanished, in the journals of Paris or province. One can not imagine, in fact, the amount of vigor and spirit which is expended, at the same time as the number of curiosities of all kinds which are thus lost.

extremely rare at the time, when printing technology was expensive and inaccessible, over a century before the 'Mimeograph Revolution', and Karr's rationale in this essay for self-publishing as political and literary dissent, shows him laying the very early groundwork upon which 'zine and micropress publishing would eventually emerge. Karr's discourse in each issue swerves and merges unpredictably, almost as if by stream of consciousness, between political tirades, comedy sketches, gossip and in-jokes about the avant-garde community, literary and social criticism, and sarcastic observations about daily life. The series was re-issued in 1853 under the newly-installed dictator Napoleon III, but redacted for its political outspokenness. After an abortive attempt to re-start the journal, Karr ceased writing, refusing to do so under a totalitarian regime, and devoted the rest of his life to botany.

The Wasps (1839 & 1853)

I. Introduction to Redacted 1853 edition:

The history recounted by the *Wasps* encases a period of ten years.

Of this collection, completely unavailable in bookstores, they asked me for a new edition.

I would consider my integrity concerned not to make any changes, either in the ideas, nor in the judgements,—even had my ideas and my judgements changed,—which they have not.

Only a few pages have been suppressed, at the demand of the editors,—we could not have printed today that which we spoke at the time,—and I do not wish to speak otherwise.

I shall reread the hundred volumes of *Wasps*, and, in my conscience, I can repeat today that which I stated at the top of the first volume, published in November 1839.

A.K.

April 1853

~~~~~

### **Preface, Warning, Forward; All of It in Twenty Lines (1839 Forward)**

This little book is the first of twelve such volumes which shall appear successively each month, between now and a year hence.

They shall contain frank and inexorable expression of my thought on men and on things exclusive of any idea of ambition, of any party influence.

I would speak without rage, because in my eyes the most spiteful men are even more ridiculous than spiteful, and incidentally I am certain that they also make at the same time more harm and more regret.

I do not belong to any party: I judge things as they occur, men as they appear; I take few things seriously, because, having no need of anyone but my friends, and not demanding their friendship from them, I feel, I see and I judge with the detachment and tranquil cheerfulness of a reasonably well-seated spectator.

I address my little books *to the unknown friends* whom I can have in the world, to the gentlemen of good sense and of spirit: that is to say that I took measures in order not to require but a small number of subscribers.

We laugh well together at gentlemen who would wish to pass as serious, and we amuse ourselves by measuring the pettiness of *great* men and of *great* things.

---

*November 1839*

Certainly, to people who know me as a man of leisure and fantasy, it must seem extraordinary that I should go thus, with lightness of heart, to give myself the bother and ennui to create a publication, when there appear every morning under the ambitious heading of *organs of public opinion*, such a great quantity of squares of paper, wherein it would be permissible for me to slide whatever I might have to say to my contemporaries.

It must therefore be that I had a strong and invincible reason, and that reason is here:

It is that *there is not ONE journal in which one could put twenty lines where it would be neither foolish, nor in bad faith*. I take it to a number of witnesses, men of spirit and of talent, who write there or rather who struggle there against such ennui and bad taste. I do better, I prove.

As least as I recall it, in the month of July of the year 1830, a revolution was made *for freedom of the press* by that interesting part of the population which does not know how to read: the press is thus free.

If despotism has its inconveniences, liberty has its own too; despotism is regarded

by those who exercise it, either as a law, or as a power acquired by force, and consequently odious<sup>2</sup>: like law, it has limits, like all law, outside of which it would cease to exist; like usurpation, there is a drop that one dares not put into the cup at the risk of making it overflow.

But liberty having one virtue, it takes its most gruesome or its most grotesque excesses for progress, and it does not recognise limits.

The government thought to act wisely, in putting *some* restrictions on liberty of the press.

These few restrictions fill in the Code eleven pages, each and every one containing fifty lines of sixty letters, that is to say around seventy pages of an ordinary volume.

The government thought to act wisely, in which it is perfectly misguided.

The press without shackles served as counter-weight to itself; every nuance had its journal, and each journal had but a small number of readers.

The caution-money<sup>3</sup> was the greatest shackle, but at the same time it created privileges; that is to say that, if it made many journals impossible, it gave immense power to those which could fulfill its conditions, in that the diverse nuances of readers were absorbed into one colour and made for each of the existing journals a too-numerous readership.

The fiscal conditions imposed upon the press removed them from the hands of writers in order to put them into those of speculators and entrepreneurs.

Thus, today, one cannot cite a single writer-owner of a journal; but, in revenge, the press is governed, directed by old hatmakers, old pharmacists, old lawyers, etc.; by a few,—the journals by stock-shares,—belong at the same time to two thousand grocers, bootmakers, pastry-chefs, haberdashers, meat-roasters, porters, wigmakers, butchers, barristers—and other citizens of a dubious literature.

Here are the results of this order of things for the government and for the writers.

The government, by one of those blunders which none but governments would

---

2 “le despotisme est considéré par celui qui l’exerce, ou comme un droit, ou comme une puissance acquise par la force, et conséquemment odieuse;”

3 After the Restoration Monarchy was overthrown in 1830 in the name of a Free Press and other (largely unfulfilled) grievances, the Cautionnement, or Caution-Money, was instituted by the Liberal monarchy that took control, in order to control the political opposition on both left and right without direct censorship. This was a large monetary deposit paid in advance by the publisher, to act as ‘security’ against any future charges of sedition or political agitation that might later be filed against the journal. For a detailed analysis, see Jeremy D. Popkin, *Press, Revolution, and Social Identities in France, 1830-1835*, passim.

know how to commit, made to pass the weapon which it feared in the hands of poets into the hands of businessmen and merchants. The merchants know what they put into and what they risk in an enterprise, and multiply the earnings by the risks that should return this money to them. They have a stability, a pertinacity, that the writers have never had, these who have never had in view ideas, paradoxes<sup>4</sup> or systems. The merchants go straight to their goal, which is to bleed the government dry as friend or as foe, or to topple it in order to take or sell its place. You wanted to have business with the merchants; well then! settle yourself with them; they buy the press from you in bulk, they sell it back to you in retail, and shall make a profit on it, and they shall sell it to you expensively, and they shall pay you entirely with that which is yours, and of a good many things which are not yours.

For the gentlemen of letters, who speak so highly and so often of their independence, here is what they gained from *progress*. They are no more, it is true, paid wages by Louis XIV; they lift the head proudly and sympathise with or misunderstand Corneille, who suffered this shameful yoke; but they are paid wages by Mr. Third-Etate, bargaining in wine, or making smokestacks, or two thousand bootmakers, meat-roasters, porters, barristers, etc., of whom I was speaking to you just now, who deposited the caution-money of a one-hundred-thousand francs required by law.

<@> There are but two kinds of journals: those which approve and prop up the government, whatever it should do, and those which blame and attack it, whatever it should do. That the government should take two *contradictory* measures, something neither impossible nor rare: it is clear that if the one is bad, the second is good. Oh well! *There is not a single journal* where one can say this.

<@> The journals of the opposition are just as servile in their criticism as the ministerial journals in their enthusiasm.

<@> Aside from these obvious drawbacks, there are other more hidden ones.

One such independent journal, usually hostile to power, soften their colours each time that a royal theatre fails to renew the contract of a certain skinny dancer.

<@> Another such, always candid with admiration in front of the youngest sons of the Bureau of Ministers, mix a little absinthe in their honey, a certain times when it is the custom to discuss the subsidies given to the journals.

Just as in no journal can one express one's whole thought, there is for the gentle-

---

4 "Paradox" in underground Romanticist slang signified a conceptual formulation in which logic was used to create or support an impossible or self-contradictory proposition—a forerunner of pataphysical reasoning.

men who have no ambition, and therefore retain good sense and good faith, there is<sup>5</sup> one drawback which prevents from uniting with any of the parties in possession of the press.

The governmental party, to judge by its bosses<sup>6</sup>, has the advantage over the opposition party. It possesses men of real science, experience, true spirit and good company; but it drags behind it every one of the beggars, valets and bigots.

The opposition party presents with a just pride gentlemen of resolution and even devotion, gentlemen of severe and tested integrity; but its tail is formed of all of the slacking womanizers of the cafés, the rowdy, the bums, the spineless,<sup>7</sup> armchair terrorists.

And the commendable men of the two parties know how cumbersome and difficult these tails are to drag around.

<@> There does not exist in France a single journal which would dare to print complete in their columns the present little book. It is not however because it holds anything which should be contrary to the law, to public morality, and good sense—praise God, they do not watch so closely here.

*Translated by Olchar E. Lindsann*

***from:***

*Les Guêpes*, Nov., 1839. Ed. & Written by Alphonse Karr. Self-Published, Paris.

**&**

Alphonse Karr, *Les Guêpes: Première Série. Nouvelle édition.* 1887. 2nd Ed. Calmann Lévy, Paris. Three Volumes.

[illegible]

5 sic.

## 6 “sommités”

7 “fainéants coureurs d’estaminets, de tapageurs, de brailards, de vauriens, de *colotteurs de pipes*.” Karr is indulging in a number of neologisms and apparently unconventional usages here; my current translation of “colutteurs de pipe”—technically “those who wear pants signifying support of the Reign of Terror who sit around smoking pipes”—as “armchair terrorists” is pretty loose and I welcome suggested improvements.

*Michel Roly was a carpenter active in the French Socialist network around 1840. Little is known of him; he was probably self-taught, and printed his poetry in radical workers' journals such as **La Ruche populaire**. His poem "The Bee" was published in an anthology of Socialist workers' poetry edited by Olinde Rodrigues, a key organiser and theorist of Saint-Simonist socialism and the coiner of the term 'Avant-Garde' as taken up (probably with his encouragement) by radicalised elements within Romanticist subculture. John M. Bennett has produced a homophonic transduction of the poem, favouring the transmission of sound over semantics.*

## Obey

*Transduction by John M. Bennett*

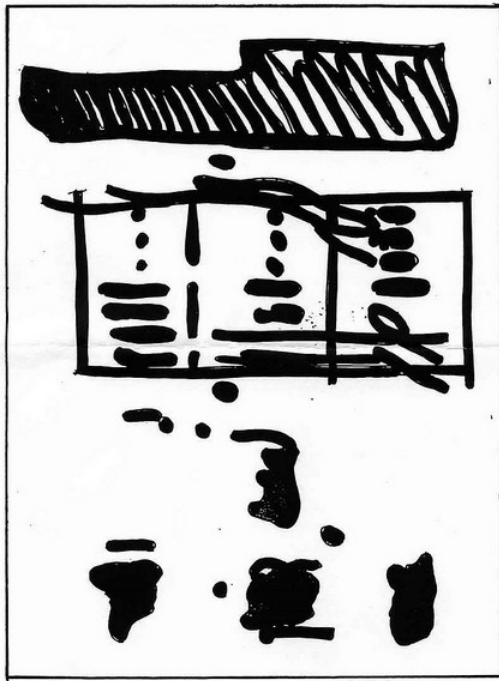
A pair of furious vents' dull hoard,  
Surprise a loin's jar of republic sot,  
One obeys joy's dull sort,  
Isolated melancholic eats,  
Sued the mortared cum unbent:  
The car's iced bad, sandy ether's futile,  
The vile east, dizzy hell, a foot's bent present;  
What sorts my low desire: my jerky piss careened in vain?  
Oh meal distiller, what sordid cake abstains my junk?  
Junk nor reconnoitered piss danced trussed's cess climactic,  
Mooned the humble packrat, such simple eglantine;  
Jesus' vain church the pus ledger rapes.  
Awesome Freud abstinence ate,  
Bent the vent, and the hatted moon triped;  
Oh grey day mist desires, terminal maw of sufferance!  
Hell dips: quandered Phoebus, dumb bean-flavored rayon,  
The rechuffed Satan, renacred fits in sounded choir  
The tent's duped appearance,  
Its courage ardor ate.  
Lore's changing language day,  
Notorious obeyed, in ceaseless moths, addressed the Toot-Pissed  
(or Pluto or Sol, said senseless pus image):  
"Lass! What recoinage pours the coughing moon's chorus?  
See scenic promise assured, eat a sincere  
Days' chanchre makes the vile empire  
A horror that ate the less human servants."



Fiddled piss is the ceaseless voice, the feeble creature  
 Descried danced the airs, saw fried chimney sense:  
 "A mind touted the flowers nature produced,  
 Oily roses, but ate the jasmin;  
 Ate voiced, sure teeth, whose nasal sand cultured  
 Day's mist larceny, loin of chagrined voices,  
 Vexed and delicious joy's  
 Oval mind a chalice evokes!  
 Ceaseless poured OM and Dew poured butter jerk in veins!  
 Apprentice car, belled mist tooth,  
 Clay pursed hour of day's novels;  
 Voice received a suck whose day's pawed mortals  
 Put on calm less dollars, appraised the suffering;  
 Ate the sheer clumped jaw, lurid dance recoined,  
 An ill broiled sore's the author's  
 Dull creator of the celestial throat."  
 Or, is't a pendulant sea discourse all borders quells,  
 A stacked floor offers sordid route  
 To Hell's tall buttered ossuary;  
 Sea which fits a bent labor neutered  
 Suspended in sun's pissoir,  
 Divined pensive and saucy...  
 Or disposed to precocious treasure sounds?  
 Maze of sound's doom clock's a vapid scene o'erlaid:  
 What face sees brute? Sees a bombed village,  
 Envious asshole obeyed  
 A venous table sees trouble eat, sees laws  
 Suck off a brief illness veined with deconstructed lore.  
 A notorious heroine defines the respite,  
 Which, the treatment sore, recuts its danced sound said,  
 Jerked to finish the sand's dazed commentary.  
 Blinking, expect to obey said mind,  
 The village says toil;  
 Toil for veins' elevation, to choke on *Popular Rust*;  
*Is this my offered sound's turbulence abraded?*

[illegible]





Rea Nikonova

Rea Nikonova: page 19 & 20: <http://dare.uva.nl/document/2/30565>

lines of the square by blurry unstructured letters. Thus, it can also be seen as a reservoir of potential:

[The colossal potential accumulated by this "black gap" of art can collapse into a dot, evaporate to a white square, to the vacuum art of a platform [...] or it can simply grow vectors of energy.) One possibility, therefore, is to reveal the so-called energies hidden in the black geometrical form. These are realized as vectors springing out from the geometrical form, leading apparently no-where at times.]

(Nikonova and Sigej 1990)

[PALIMPSESTS. VISUAL POETRY BY RY NIKONOVA AND SERGEJ SIGEJ, vy C. Greve (2004)

*Thee Black Square Inn the visual poetry of Ry Nikonova*, Kazimir Malevich's Black Square plays an important role as an icon of the ideal synthesis of literature and painting. The Black Square is seen as the ultimate palimpsest, as the supreme finality of all literature: :

(If one regards the masterpiece of the Black Square as a literary collapse which contains all words of all times and peoples, then turning again to a verbal sphere becomes superfluous.) (Nikonova 1998:82)

This is most plainly visualized in her poem 'Transponirovanie kartiny K. Malevichaa v cernyj bespauznyj stich' (Transposition of K. Malevich's Picture to a Black Poem without Spaces'). However, a potential transgression of the Black Square emerges in the thinning of the edges of this visual poem resulting from an apparently arbitrary transgression of the geometrical

**Jim Leftwich:** "If one regards the masterpiece of the Black Square as a literary collapse

which contains all words of all times and peoples, then turning again to a verbal sphere becomes superfluous." -Nikonova

**Peter Ciccariello:** And if not?

**Jim Leftwich:** If one does not regard the masterpiece of the Black Square as a literary collapse which contains all words of all times and peoples, then turning again to a verbal sphere does not become superfluous.

**Peter Ciccariello:** Interesting link, in the sense that the square would be the logical extension of abstract at the time. <https://news.artnet.com/.../kizimir-malevich-black-square...>

Shocking Insights into Malevich's 'Black Square' - artnet News, NEWS.ARTNET.COM

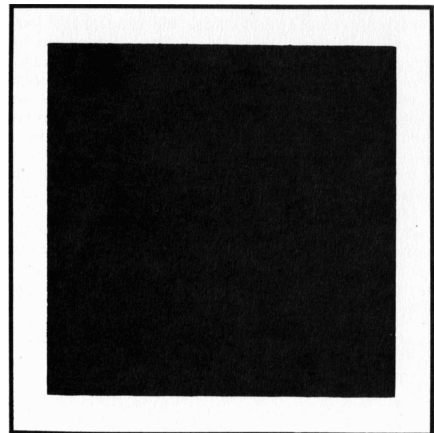
[“It was known that under the Black Square, there was some underlying image,” Ekaterina Voronina, an art researcher at the Tretyakov told *Kultura TV*. “We found out that there is not one image, but two.”

She continued, “We proved that the initial image is a Cubo-Futurist composition, while the painting lying directly under the Black Square—the colors of which you can see in the cracks—is a proto-Suprematist composition.”

The x-ray analysis also uncovered a handwritten note by the artist on the painting’s white border which is still being deciphered. However, according to AFP, preliminary investigations have revealed that the text says “Negroes battling in a cave.”

The note may be a reference to an 1897 black square painting by the French writer Alphonse Allais titled *Combat des Negres dans une cave, pendant la nuit* (“Negroes Fighting in a Cellar at Night.”)

If the preliminary interpretation holds up, it could support a connection to the earlier French painting, demonstrating that one of Malevich’s most famous works was in fact an art historical response or an interpretation of Allais’s piece, showing that the Russian artist’s pool of influences had been much broader than previously thought.]



*Malevich, Black Square*

**John M. Bennett:** The actual painting is full of brush strokes and subtle variations

**Peter Ciccariello:** A black square is not a black square. I remember standing in front of it for an inordinate amount of time aware of tiny explosions of color from the black field to the margin.

**John M. Bennett:** yes indeed

**Jim Leftwich:** I love the connection to the Incoherents group

The Incoherents:

1882, the poet Paul Bilhaud exhibited *Combat de négres dans une cave, pendant la nuit* (Negroes fighting in a cellar at night)

1883, Alphonse Allais exhibited *Première communion de jeunes filles chlorotiques par un temps de neige* (First Communion of Anaemic Girls in the Snow)

1884, Alphonse Allais exhibited *Récolte de la tomate par des cardinaux apoplectiques au bord de la mer Rouge* (Apoplectic Cardinals Harvesting Tomatoes by the Shores of the Red Sea)

Later Allais published a book of these and other similar works, which also included *Marche funèbre composée pour les funérailles d'un grand homme sourd* (Funeral March for the Obsequies of a Deaf Man)

**John M. Bennett:** formidable!

**Peter Ciccariello:** fabulous!

I think I need to be an incoherent from now on.



*Incoherent works by Alphonse Allais*



*The avant-comedian Alphonse Allais, discussed above, was one of the most active writers and organisers of the Incoherents group, and later of the **Chat Noir**, with many of the same collaborators. He performed at the famous cabaret and co-edited its journal. The **Chat Noir** was one of the few places where avant-garde subculture genuinely merged with popular culture, and Allais is still highly regarded in France, though obscure in the anglophone world. Revenant Editions is currently preparing a chapbook of his work.*

## Some Figures (1893)

*by Alphonse Allais*

Terront emerged as victor of the match known by the name of the *Terront-Corre Match*, after having *covered* a thousand kilometers in 41 hours 58 minutes 52 4/5 seconds.

A parenthesis, i.y.p.<sup>8</sup>

(Some uninitiated readers have written to me from the provinces to request a hint on this expression *covered*. Why do we say *he has covered* instead of *he has travelled*?)

The explanation is spicy enough.

It is Mr. Porel, the clever ex-director of Eden, with the real name of Parfourou, who prevailed upon the cycling authorities to replace the word *travelled* with the word *covered*, in order to avoid the inevitably regrettable confusions.

Close the parenthesis, i.y.p. )

Since I had nothing to do this morning, I busied myself with some calculations.

1,000 kilometers in 41 hours 58 minutes 52  $\frac{4}{5}$  seconds, that puts the kilometer at 19 seconds and 12 tierces (the tierce is quite a small measurement rarely used in everyday life, which corresponds to one sixtieth of a second), and the meter to 1 tierce and some change.

I have not pursued it right up to the millimeter, such calculation seeming pointless to me. It would, indeed, be quite strange never to attempt to record the millimeter.

This pleasant speed, quite respectable for a cyclist, becomes almost ridiculous if we compare it to the speed of light (77,000 leagues per second).

8 “if you please” (“s.v.p.” in the original)





## 1. Poor Little Absinthe Drinker

(to Dr. Louis Julien)

**Translator's Introduction:** *Intoxicants have been with mankind since before recorded history. The knowledge of how to use them was, initially, the province of shamen, priests, herbalists, lone seekers and the like. With the advent of social structures (from tribes to cities) the context for taking intoxicants began to change. With the division of social time divided between labor and leisure, so too were intoxicants restricted to those few circumstances which were still sanctioned (religious rites, medical emergencies, etc.), so as not to interfere with productive 'labor time'.*

*But, like Pandora's Box, the use of intoxicants, though once known only to the elect few, became the province of the many, and this pharmacological knowledge could never be made obscure again. As societies became more and more complex, so increased the number of people who 'fell through the cracks' of those societies; the disenfranchised, the destitute, the mad...*

*To these unfortunates were left the means of escaping pain, fear, loneliness... albeit temporarily.*

*Intoxicants used as anodyne and panacea; a false hope and a cure as deadly as any disease. Pain delayed is still pain yet-to-come. True **Lethe** comes only for the dead, until then, there are only her pale, seductive and nefarious sisters: among which are **Opium** and **Absinthe**.*

She was always pregnant,  
Or so it always seemed...  
Poor little absinthe drinker!

She lived in fear  
Of her brutal lover:  
She was always pregnant.  
On nights when the sky oozes,  
She lay down beneath the open heavens.  
Poor little absinthe drinker!

Those that debauchery exhausts  
Leered at her with a bitter eye:  
She was always pregnant!  
In Paris, this labyrinth,  
Immense as the sea,  
Poor little absinthe drinker!

She went, dead-eyed,  
Crawling along the walls like a worm...  
She was always pregnant!

Oh! This faded skirt  
Who dragged herself out every winter!  
Poor little absinthe drinker!

Her voice was only a murmur,  
In her stomach grew a cancer:  
She was always pregnant!

What shy lament  
Will speak its hideous statement!  
Poor little absinthe drinker!

I see her, poor doe-eyed country-girl, again  
As if it were yesterday:  
She was always pregnant!

Frightened more and more  
Of nothing at all, while turning her spoon;  
Poor little absinthe drinker!

Once she'd had a pint  
The coughing started, - oh! how she suffered,  
She was always pregnant! -

She bitched: "This is destroying me!  
I am already in Hell! "

Poor little absinthe drinker!

Nonetheless, she drank a pint  
Of the awful green liquid:  
She was always pregnant!

And Agony was painted  
Upon her barely open eye;  
Poor little absinthe drinker!

When her lover says, not kidding:  
"You'll abort it, that's for damned sure!"  
"She was always pregnant."  
—Poor little absinthe drinker!

*Translated by Raymond E. Andre III*

---

## 2. The Belovèd Embalmed

*À Joseph Carriès.*

*(Translation dedicated to Lady Shannon Valerian)*

So as to tear death from so beautiful an angel,  
From the atrocious kisses of the worm,  
I embalmed her in a strange box.  
One winter's night:  
From out of this frozen body, rigid and livid,  
Came her poor dead organs,  
And into this open stomach as bloody as it was empty  
Were poured perfumed oils,

Chlorine, tar and powdered lime;  
And when it was quite full,  
A silver sewing needle passed through it  
Making but a single crease upon her skin.

Her eyes where great Nature  
    Had placed the azure of its skies  
And which would have been devoured by pestilential decay,  
    Were replaced by artificial blue eyes.

The pharmacist, with a certain gum,  
    Succeeded in petrifying her;  
And when he yapped, cheerfully, stinking of brandy:  
    “That won’t rot ever!”

I said to my dead love. “You would’ve been pierced like an old tree  
    “By the reptiles of the tomb,  
“Before the embalming: now, as hard as marble, Darling,  
    “You won’t lose the least shred!”

Then, alone, I painted her lips purple  
    With essence of carmine,  
I covered with jewels, rings and amulets  
    Her slender neck and her frail hand.

I half-opened her eye-lids and closed her mouth  
    Full of stupor and fright;  
And, gravely, I placed her dainty slipper  
    Upon her poor, small, cold foot.

I veiled the body in a gauze shroud,  
    I unbound her long hair,  
And falling upon my knees I passed from ecstasy  
    To an atrocious and nervous delirium.

Then, in an intense neurotic paroxysm  
    Crushing me like a weight of fatal lead,  
Haggard, I spread upon her a long spray of roses  
    Within her crystal bier.

The putrescent odors had escaped the room,  
And over golds and velvets  
The breaths of benzoin, vetiver and amber  
Hovered hot, irritating and heavy.

And I gazed upon her, this precious mummy:  
And her beauty revived once more,  
I dared to imagine that she was but lulled to sleep  
In the arms of pleasure.

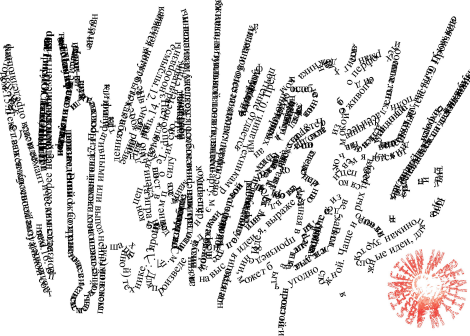
And leading to a cool vault where balustrades  
Of black marble and massive gold,  
Forever, gleam sepulchral lamps,  
Below a pensive skull,

The dead belovèd in her transparent and splendid coffin,  
Mocking putrefaction,  
Sleeps, intact and serene, amorous and without guile,  
Before my astonished gaze.

*Translated by Raymond E. Andre III*

Both poems from Maurice Rollinat, *Les Névroses*. 1883. Charpentier: Paris.

~~~~~  
Manifest 2 & Manifest 3 *by Edward Kulemin*



Gothic Song (1849),

by Gérard de Nerval

Nerval, was among the most influential of the first-generation avant-garde, though his poetry circulated only in journals and manuscript until long after his death. This decadent little poem was written for music by the frenetic composer Limnander for his opera Les Monténégrins in 1849. Gérard collaborated on the libretto with the Romanticist writer/historian Alboize Pujol.

Lovely bride,
Your tears I praise!
The dew you've cried
Befits bouquets.

What's lovely knows
But once Spring's prime,
Let's sow the rose
The steps of Time!

Brunette or blonde,
Why choose just one?
For this world's God
Is known as Fun.

Translated by Olchar E. Lindemann

from Nerval, *Poesies*. Ed Mounir Hafez. 1964.
Gallimard: Paris

toutes les choses sont elles

(1830/2016)

by John M. Bennett, from Charles Nodier

*Nodier's novel **Les Sept Châteaux du Roi de Bohême** (see next page) is strewn with list poems—inspired largely by Rabelais and Sterne—which have become staples in avant-garde writing ever since, from Gautier to the Surrealists to many threads of Otherstream writing. Bennett has broken apart, mixed up, and re-glued one such list in a posthumous collaboration.*

si tronquées mes pieds si mas
tiquées mes doigts my blood I
chewed si compliquées les
gommes I wrote you with
si déloquées les paroles
updown si imbriquées si ét
riquées yr short fat ton
ggues si détriquées my
burning shirts my sheets
my shits my shorts si dé
froquées si pelues si
trépelues si si farfelues my
farts com mand yr voices si
patraquées yr sleeps si
involues si goth iquées
que je me vois le dos
au miroir la dos la pied la
doigt

*D'après une liste de Charles Nodier,
dans Histoire du roi de Bohême, 1830*

~~~~~

*by Charles Nodier*

Charles Nodier was a seminal figure in the founding of the avant-garde. His 1830 experimental novel **The Seven Castles of the King of Bohemia** contains not only this phonetic poem (built largely from onomatopoeia, of which he had compiled a dictionary), but also stunning visual, typographical, pictographic, and list-poems like the one used by Bennett in the previous piece. Nodier says: “...this page, entirely unique among all the written monuments of language, hides, beneath the appearance of a simple witicism, the strongest effort of creative imagination; the secret of the **Novum organum**<sup>10</sup> and the **Characteristic**; the universal intelligence that the kantists, ecclesiastics and pundits, so in love with clarity, still seek gropingly!”

Pif paf pîaf patapan.  
 Ouhîyîns ouhîyîns. Ebroh   broha broha, Ouhîyîns ouhîyîns.  
 Ho   hu. Dia hurau. Tza tza tza.  
 Cla cla cla. Vli vlan. Flic flac. Flaflaflac.  
 Tza tza tza. Psi psi psi. Ouistle.  
 Zou lou lou. Rlurlurlu. Ouistle,  
 Cla cla cla. Flaflaflac.  
 Ta ta ta. Ta ta ta. Pouf.  
 Ouhîyîns. Ebroh   broha. Ouhîyîns ouhîyîns.  
 Ta ta—ta ta—ta ta—ta ta—hup.  
 A u ho. Tza tza tza. O hem. O hup. O war!  
 Trrrrrrrrrrrrrrr. Hup. O hep. O hup. O hem. Hap!  
 Trrrrrrrrrrrrrrr. O hup. O h  . O halt! O! Ooooooh!  
 Xi xi xi xi! Pic! Pan! Bao  nd.  
 Hourra!!!!!!!

from Charles Nodier, *Les Sept Chateaux du roi de bohême / Les Quatre talismans*. 1852. Lecou, Paris.

[illegible]

## Volapük Fragments (1890)

*Toussaint-des-Mornes*" (Francis Vièle-Griffin)

Polü nâta del fatela  
Cils ekômoms lôbo zi bed;  
Fukel omsik edlemom, yed  
Epukôm vips nâtadela.

“Binols-od gudik, cils gâla,”  
Sagom bâledan,” dat, fûdo,  
Got omes cils givom-la, do  
Man etos no melidom-la!

from *Entretiens politiques et littéraires*. Year 1, No. 1, April 1890. ed. Paul Adam & Francis Vièle-Griffin. Librairie de l'art indépendant: Paris.

*M.H. was born in Dallas in 1958. Shortly afterwards, fish fell from the sky.*

### Knife at Raintime (c.1980s)

Michael Helsen

Fidil pefalöl dese lusil,  
O lecütel, tobuls no dönu  
olükömons is lienetiks.  
Exilonok mekavamüster  
nesinifodio sembal, e  
mutob gegivön ad ol voli  
kölöfikum keli älärnob  
da logs ola, voli de fil kel  
päfanon fa ob de olikes muds  
tel, e voli dolas luplikün  
in ola lad keli ädünob.

("Or fallen from the sorry sky, O great deceiver, Mad Octobers will not arrive here again. The artificial mystery has banished itself to some meaninglessness or other, & i must give you back the world more colorful i learned through your eyes, the world of fire that was caught by me from your mouths twain, & the world of most wolfish griefs in your heart which i served.")

The **Revenant Series** publishes translations, histories, and new editions of works related to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century avant-garde, including the Romanticist, Frenetic, Occultist, Utopian Socialist, Bohemian, Parnassian, Decadent, and Symbolist communities.

## New from mOnocle-Lash

***Pif Paf Patapan! A Sampler of Phonetic Poetry From the 19th Century***, by Théophile Gautier, Charles Nodier, Paul Verlaine, & Francis Vielé-Griffin. 8 pp. A pocket pre-history of sound poetry: five phonetic poems published between 1830 & 1891. The poets who were read by the Futurists, Dadas, & Zoumists, and whose experiments they consolidated into a new form.

***The Prelude: Translated into Even-More-Boring-and-Trite; Vol. 3***, by Fast Sedan Nellson & William Wordsworth. 24 pp. The next thrilling, anxiously-awaited installment of Fast Sedan Nellson's masterpiece of translation, in which young Wordsworth *remains at school!*

## In Preparation for the mOnocle-Lash Revenants Series

***Some Squibs***, by Alphonse Allais. Stories and poems by avant-satirist Allais (1854–1905): core member of the Hydropathes, Incoherents, and Chat Noir groups, painter of the first colour-field pictures, composer of the first soundless music score. *Tentative Winter 2016-17 release.*

***The Feminine Frenetic***, ed. Olchar E. Lindsann. A first sampling of poems by just a few of the dozens of female participants in the first self-declared "avant-garde" movement, Frenetic Romanticism, many of them unpublished in any language since 1836. A first step. *Tentative Spring 2017 release.*

***Philothée O'Neddy: Brigand of Thought***. The first full-length collection in English of the Bouzingo co-founder, one of the most influential, yet forgotten, writers of the Romanticist avant-garde. Includes selections from his poetry, theory, fiction, criticism, & correspondence, memoirs by his friends and collaborators, plus a critical biography and bibliography, for the most comprehensive view of his total project ever published. *Tentative Summer 2017 release.*

Sept., A.Da. 100

A.H. 186

2016 C.E.

**mOnocle-Lash Anti-Press**  
**REVENANT SERIES**  
monoclelash.wordpress.com  
monoclelash@gmail.com

